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Iowa: How great art thou?

How can you resist Marion, Iowa's pitch: "Lets put Iowa on the map as the world leader in the disposal of municipal solid waste."

Fairfield, always creative, is pitching a "Creative Economy Theme Park" along with a "Peace Palace."

Donna Kinney sent in a handwritten note seeking some state help to turn her Council Bluffs farmstead into a bed and breakfast.

How great thou art, Iowa?

Darned great if you read the 145 applications for the Iowa Great Places program.

The governor's initiative invited Iowa communities to submit community development ideas that could use some help from Iowa's state agencies.

They came pouring in. Restore barns in Jefferson County. Strengthen the Des Moines Metro Opera. Create an Iowa writers and artists road. Most seem to revolve around history and arts, with

a generous dose of outdoor recreation. There's not lots of dough available. The Legislature provided \$800,000 statewide. Great Places is supposed to work by providing a little of that cash and focusing existing state park, highway, tourism and other resources on specific projects that already enjoy good community support.

The Quad-City region sent in 12 applications. Here is our review, along with contact numbers so you can learn more.